

BERNARDIA MYRICIFOLIA VAR. INCANOIDES (EUPHORBIACEAE),

NEW VARIETY FROM THE CHIHUAHUAN DESERT REGION

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Bernardia myricifolia (Scheele) Watson is a species of intricately branched shrubs occurring rather abundantly from the southern margins of the Edwards Plateau of central Texas southward through all of southern Texas, much of Tamaulipas almost to the Tropic of Cancer, northeastern Nuevo León and northeastern Coahuila; there are also disjunct populations near the towns of Huizache, Guadalcázar, and Rioverde in San Luis Potosí. Westward, the species invades the Chihuahuan Desert Region only in scattered localities, in the lower canyons of the Rio Grande (to Terrell County, Texas) and central and northwestern Coahuila, with one locality in southeastern Chihuahua, one in extreme southwestern Coahuila, and one in extreme northeastern Durango.

Plants at these last two mentioned localities differ from all the rest of the species in that the radii of the stellate trichomes of the herbage are appressed to the epidermis (rather than raised) and the ventral style-surfaces are merely rugose (as opposed to having extremely prominent laciniae in all other populations). Since these two populations form a variety well defined geographically and morphically, I propose a formal name as follows.

BERNARDIA MYRICIFOLIA var. INCANOIDES M. C. Johnst., var. nov.--A var. typica radiis trichomatum adpressis, stylis ventraliter leviter rugosis differt. TYPE: MEXICO: Durango, northern end of Sierra del Rosario, 25°45' N. lat., 104°00' W. long, 1800 meters, steep limestone slopes, with Agave lecheguilla Torr., Fouquieria splendens Engelm., Dasyilirion sp., Parthenium sp., Acacia sp., etc., 2 November 1972, M. C. Johnston, T. Wendt & F. Chiang 10022 (LL, holotype; isotypes MEXU and elsewhere). Other collection seen: Mexico, Coahuila, Sierra de Jimulco ca 10 km. south-southwest of La Rosita, 25°11' N. lat., 103°16' W. long., 1750 meters, limestone slopes with Acacia, Mimosa, Mortonia, Dasyilirion, Cordia, Opuntia, Eysenhardtia, 19 September 1973, J. Henrickson 13256 (LL).

The varietal name indicates a resemblance to B. incana C. V. Morton of Arizona, California and Baja California. This resemblance may be more than merely superficial, for the three species B. myricifolia, B. incana and B. obovata I. M. Johnst. although adequately distinct from each other seem to form a closely inter-related species-group.

The two species of Bernardia occurring in the Chihuahuan Desert Region may be distinguished as follow:

Leaves more or less elliptic or oblong, beneath prominently reticulate and densely stellate-pubescent, drying blue-green above; fruits mostly 3-loculed and 3-seeded; stamens 10--16.

..... B. myricifolia

Leaves more or less obovate, beneath not prominently reticulate nor densely stellate-pubescent, drying pale gray-green; fruits 2-loculed, usually 2-seeded or by abortion 1-seeded; stamens 3--7 . . . . . B. obovata

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